

TRINITY CHARGE--THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
 Ralph C. Link, Pastor
 Trinity Church, New Bloomfield 9:00 A.M.
 Christ Church, Duncannon 10:30 A.M.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP July 16, 1972

The Organ Prelude
 *The Hymn of Praise 289
 *The Call to Worship
 *The Prayer of Confession (Unison)
 O thou Author of creation and Father of mankind, we acknowledge and confess that our hearts are unworthy to receive thee, for we have offended thee in word and thought and deed. We have made frail excuses when called to responsible decision. We have withheld ourselves from right duty by refusing to obey thy command to love. We have hidden our faces from thy truth which is light and consoled ourselves in darkness. But we pray thee, our Father, to deem us worthy to be restored to thyself. Save us from our sin, blot out our guilt, and remold us into a new creation devoted to thy will and worthy of thy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
 *The Kyrie
 *The Assurance of Pardon
 The Scripture----Isaiah 8:11-22 9:1-7
 *The Gloria Patri
 The Pastoral Prayer
 The Announcements
 The Receiving of Tithes and Offerings
 *The Doxology
 *The Offering Prayer and Lord's Prayer
 The Hymn of Meditation 286
 The Sermon----"Witch? Or What?" Part I
 The Sermon Prayer
 *The Hymn of Response 292
 *The Benediction

*The Threefold Amen
 *The Postlude

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

This week your pastor will be in Cleveland. If you should have a need please contact Mr. Joe Darlington at 582-2330 or George Lepperd at 834-4271. If there is a need for pastoral help please contact Rev. Larry Hummer at 582-4356.

Newspapers will be collected in New Bloomfield Friday evening July 21st starting at 6:00 PM. Duncannon residents and RD residents may bring their papers and magazines to Tressler's Esso Station. Bundle papers and magazines separately please.

WELCOME VISITORS
 TINA MAGEE

Part I

/SA 1A4

"Which? Or What?"

Text: Isaiah 8:19-22 "And when they say to you, "Consult the mediums and the wizards who chirp and mutter," should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the teaching and the testimony! Surely for this word which they speak there is no dawn. They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry; and when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will curse their king and their God, and turn their faces upward; and they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be thrust into thick darkness."

"Today you must exert extra caution with vehicles, tools or flammable or breakable materials. Hurrying the job means that you will likely have to do the job over."

"A restless week opens with interesting people, something new to consider while working. Take good companions with you wherever you go."

"Today is the day to sell a coherent plan. Proclaim yourself and your merits. Evening should see you with some news to celebrate."

What does all of this talk amount to? Well if you haven't guessed by now, these are some predictions in the column, "Your Horoscope" from last Sundays Patriot News, which is written by Jeane Dixon. Miss Dixon who predicted the assassination of John F. Kennedy correctly is considered an authority, and so perhaps you should listen to her. Or perhaps you are a follower of Carroll Righter who writes for the Chicago Daily News ~~and~~ an example of his predictions for instance for Friday January 16, for all Leo's born between July 23 and August 22; "Act in a positive way. Be off to the social with charming people and have a delightful and profitable time."

Silly? Perhaps. But according to Editor and Publisher, 1200 daily newspapers in the United States alone, publish horoscopes, as compared with only 100 papers 20 years ago. Business firms employ, actually employ, full time astrologers. In 1969 Lloyd Cope was retained by ^{THE} Abraham and Strauss department store in New York as its official astrology consultant. A member of the NEW York stock exchange, "likes to conclude important business deals at three A.M. because of his astrologer's counsel," ^{AS} ~~This was~~ quoted in Life magazine.

Sybil Leek is a self-proclaimed practising witch. She regularly flies from her home in Melbourne Beach Florida to New York and Chicago to promote fortune telling, and she counts 400 authentic witches among her personal friends. She estimates there are approximately 8 million witches in the world. (This is laying aside all jokes about mothers-in law, and wives and so on, and referring to people who practice this cult in all sincerity.)

An Air Force Captain who has a degree in Physics from VMI, a British PH.D. in anthropology is a self-professed male witch. A Dr. Buckland who edits manuals for an overseas airline likewise is a witch.

There are mediums who specialize in contacting the dead, and some of them came to the fore when the late Bishop James Pike was supposedly speaking to his departed son. There are literally hundreds of books to be found on almost any bookshelf, telling about your future, or what the stars hold for you. Yes, you will even find one on my bookshelf, but it is there merely because this book tries to explain away some of this business and to look at it from a Christian standpoint. This book was the motivation for this sermon, and I believe I have discovered that because of the depth of this subject, I cannot cover it in one sermon. So today ~~and~~ I shall present half of it, and next week, as the old time movie serials used to say, "I shall present the smashing climax to this story."

To this subject as well as any other, we must ask the question, "What does the Bible have to say about it?" Well, we must look at the Old Testament as well as the New. So today let us look at the Old Testament. The prophets spoke about sorcerers, magicians, soothsayers, and mediums. ~~THEY~~ In fact many of the old Hebrew laws prohibited the use of magic, or of magic formulations and incantations. Isaiah spoke against these people, as we read in our scripture this morning. He said, when people say to you to consult the mediums and the wizards who chirp and mutter, should not the people consult their God?

Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?

We can read a very well known story in I Samuel the 28th chapter of Saul and his use of a spitualist. Samuel had died and Saul had run the wizards and the mediums out of the land. Saul was encamped with his army ready to do battle with the Philistines, and when he saw the size of the Philistine army he became worried, and afraid. He tried to get an answer from God, but God did not seem to hear him, at least he did not answer. He didn't get an answer through his dreams or through the prophets either, and so he became doubly concerned.

Finally he told his servants to go and find a womanx who was a medium, that he could go and question. One of his servants told him, "There is a medium at Endor."

So Saul disguised himself so he would not be recognized, and he took two men with him and they arrived at this woman's place at night. He told her, "Divine for me a spirit, and bring up for me whomever I shall name to you." But the woman protested and she told him, "Now look here mister, Don't you know what King Saul has done? Why he has driven all of the wizards and mediums out of town. Why are you trying to trap me and thus cause my death?" But Saul answered, "No punishment or harm will come to you, I swear by the Lord."

So the woman being assured her life was safe, asked him who he wanted brought up. He said, "Bring up Samuel for me." When the woman saw Samuël, she was terrified and she cried out, "You are Saul. Why have you deceived me?" "You are Saul." But Saul tried to console her and reassure her that shw should have no fear. He asked, "Who do you see?" She answered, "I see a God coming up out of the earth."

Saul asked, "What is his appearance? What does he look like?" She ~~xx~~ told him, "An old man is coming up and he is wearing a robe." And immediately Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed his head to the ground and did obesiance to him.

And Samuel asked Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" ^{THEY} And Saul related how God had turned from him, and would not answer him by dreams or ^{BY} prophets and so as a last resort he had sought him through this witch. Samuel told him that he should not be asking ~~him~~ what was going to happen, since when he was alive he had predicted this would happen and now it was merely a fulfillment of God's prophecy. Saul was now completely terrified, for Samuel then related how tomorrow Saul and his sons would be killed by the Philistines, and his words were, "Tomorrow you will be with me." And it did indeed come to pass.

~~Here we have an account of a king resorting to a spiritist. This woman was called the witch of Endor, but today we would say she was a spiritualist.~~

Here is a very vivid account of someone searching into the world beyond to contact the dead, ^{THE DEAD} ~~who~~ were believed to have a supernatural knowledge, which was desired by the living. But instead of receiving enlightenment or good news, Saul was the recipient of bad news and of the fate he was to endure. As Isaiah had prophesied, "They will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be thrust into thick darkness." This, Saul found out for himself, and his discovery should be enough to make anyone realize that we are only looking in vain when we seek to know the future. We are resorting to primitive superstition, to seek answers, from spiritualists, stars, ~~astrologers~~ mediums, witches or others. We are searching in the world of darkness for light, where no light may ever be found.

The prophecy of Isaiah did not stop with the end of chapter 8. His prophecy continues on into the next chapter and there we read that in a later time, a latter day, the people who have walked in darkness will have seen a great light. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.